



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH &
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TDMHDD NAMES BRUCE EMERY ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

NASHVILLE— The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities is pleased to announce the appointment of Bruce D. Emery, MSW, to lead the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services. The division serves as the single state authority for substance abuse prevention and treatment and administers the federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment block grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The division's mission is to reduce substance abuse by promoting prevention, reducing high risk behaviors through community programs and activities, and ensuring that effective quality treatment and recovery services are available for all Tennesseans in need.

Emery brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new position. He has more than 30 years leadership experience in helping community, state, and national mental health and substance abuse organizations achieve system change. As a former community mental health and substance abuse agency director, regional and state agency program manager and senior executive with both the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, he has helped numerous communities and state departments of mental health and substance abuse develop cutting-edge clinical and administrative programs and services in rapidly-changing environments. Emery holds a Master's degree in Clinical Social Work from the Catholic University of America School of Social Services and a Master's degree in Adult Education from the University of Kentucky.

Among his leadership plans for system change, Emery will focus on developing strong partnerships with service providers, consumers, family members, alcohol and drug abuse service advocates, and affiliated agencies with goals to implement evidence-based and promising practices; achieve performance outcomes to ensure cost effective use of public funds; and use good data to make effective and consumer-centered decisions.

"I have a strong sense that Tennesseans want their alcohol and drug abuse system to offer the best, most responsive services possible," stated Emery. "I'm excited about the potential this new position offers to work with the smart and committed staff of TDMHDD to achieve that goal."

Emery has published on the economic, political, financial, legal and social practices and trends that impact how public substance abuse and mental health systems perceive, plan and organize their services to meet behavioral health care needs. Trained as a domestic family mediator by the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Center in the District of Columbia Superior Court, his current interests include services for veterans and families of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and co-occurring substance use and mental disorders.

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“TDMHDD is pleased that Bruce Emery has accepted our offer to lead this division. He will be a key member of the department’s leadership team and bring to Tennessee a wealth of knowledge and experience for clinical programs and policy initiatives that will serve our citizens well.” stated TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. “I look forward to working with Bruce to make significant and important positive changes in alcohol and drug services for Tennessee.”

Dr. Howard Burley, TDMHDD Medical Director, will continue to serve as interim assistant commissioner of the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services until Emery is in place full time after his relocation from Delaware.

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